

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WAHSDC 8867
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0534

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PBOR, IS, JO
SUBJ: DEMONSTRATIONS AND PRESS CENSORSHIP

SUMMARY: DEMONSTRATIONS IN NABLUS PROTESTING
ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. ARAB PRESS PREVENTED FROM
FILING ACCOUNTS. FOREIGN PRESS COVERAGE OBSTRUCTED.
END SUMMARY.

1. A SPATE OF DEMONSTRATIONS, CENTERED IN NABLUS,
HAS FOLLOWED GUSH EMUNIM'S PASSOVER MARCH IN THAT
AREA APRIL 5, ACCORDING TO A NABLUS COUNCILMAN.
THE IDF USED TEAR GAS TO DISPERSE THE APRIL 10 DEMONSTRATORS
WHO WERE PROTESTING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE
WEST BANK. ALTHOUGH NUMEROUS ARABS HAVE BEEN DETAINED,
NO SERIOUS CASUALTIES REPORTED.

2. ACCORDING TO AL QUDS EDITOR ABU ZULUF, THE
ARABIC PRESS HAS BEEN PREVENTED BY GOI CENSORS
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FROM COVERING DEMONSTRATIONS. THE NEAR-TOTAL
BAN HAS BEEN IN EFFECT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. ABU
ZULUF BELIEVES IT IS INTENDED TO PREVENT THE
SPREAD OF DEMONSTRATIONS.

3. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS HAVE ALSO ENCOUNTERED
DIFFICULTIES IN COVERING DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE

WEST BANK. ACCORDING TO MICHAEL ELKINS (BBC CORRESPONDENT AND MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT THE FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION) COVERAGE IS HANDICAPPED BY: 1. TROUBLE SPOTS BEING PUT OFF LIMITS, 2. MISINFORMATION BY OFFICIAL GOI SPOKESMEN AND 3. INTERRUPTION OF TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS IN TIMES OF DISORDER. SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED MARREDLY IN RECENT MONTHS. NOW, EVEN LOCAL OFFICERS CAN BAN FOREIGN JOURNALISTS FROM THE SCENE OF A DISORDER WHILE LETTING NON-JOURNALISTS PASS. MISINFORMATION FROM IDF SPOKESMAN MOST RECENTLY EXEMPLIFIED BY INITIAL WHITEWASH OF SECURITY INCIDENTS IN GALILEE ON LAND DAY FOLLOWED EVENTUALLY BY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF POLICE COMMISSIONER HILLEL. NO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ARE ENCOUNTERED AT THE STAGE OF FILING. ALTHOUGH OFFICIAL IDF GUIDELINES SPECIFY THAT CORRESPONDENTS WILL BE PERMITTED TO COVER SECURITY ACTIONS IN THE COMPANY OF AN IDF REPRESENTATIVE, ELKINS IS CONVINCED THAT IN REALITY WORD HAS BEEN PASSED TO OFFICERS THAT COVERAGE IS TO BE CURTAILED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

4. COMMENT; CONGEN CAN CONFIRM THAT IT IS INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO TELEPHONE WEST BANK TROUBLE SPOTS. ON LAND DAY MARCH 30, BOTH NABLUS AND BETHLEHEM WERE UNREACHABLE, MOST GLARING EXAMPLE OF GOI MISINFORMATION ON WEST BANK WAS GOI'S INITIAL DENIAL THAT ANY MUSLIM RELIGIOUS ARTICLES WERE DESECRATED OCT. 2, 1976 8, #3749, LATER DEFMIN PERES ACKNOWLEDGED
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DESECRATIONS IN KNESSET. DURING LAST YEAR'S DEMONSTRATIONS, THE ARABIC AND FOREIGN PRESS GAVE DETAILED, AND GENERALLY RELIABLE, ACCOUNTS OF DISTURBANCES. BOTH LIMITATION ON PRESS COVERAGE AND USE OF NON-LETHAL, ALBEIT OCCASIONALLY BRUTAL, FORCE BY IDF HAVE NO DOUBT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS YEAR'S RELATIVELY QUIET SPRING. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY FEWER PROVOCATIONS NOTWITHSTANDING THE GUSH'S RECENT INVASION. THE JERUSALEM POST AND KOL ISRAEL CONTINUE TO GIVE ABBREVIATED VERSIONS OF DEMONSTRATIONS PROBABLY FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES.
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ARAB PRESS PREVENTED FROM
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